Qwest Foundation

Nebraska Department of Education

Technology Innovation Grant

Competitive Grant Application

Directions for Completing RFP

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 69509-4987

Jim Lukesh
Learning Technology Team

Application Instructions

Please follow the application instructions exactly to avoid having your proposal penalized or returned. Please do not use special binders or folders for the proposal. The Nebraska Department of Education reserves the right to reject any proposal that is not in compliance with application instructions

Cover Page

The education agency applying for the grant must fill in the sections of the cover page. Identify the project director in order to establish a single point of contact.

Abstract

The Abstract must be contained within the space provided and must provide an overview of the major educational purposes and instructional activities of the project and its relationship to the goals of the State Board of Education.

Proposal

To present the proposal including the area of focus, description of need and plan of action, use one side of no more than ten sheets of standard 8 1/2 x 11 paper using no smaller than 10 point font and standard margins (1 inch) and double spacing. Budget sheets do not count against the ten page limit.

Eligibility

Local Educational Agencies accredited by the Nebraska Department of Education shall be eligible to submit proposals. Individual educators are eligible to win a grant once in each three-year cycle.

Budget

Specify the amounts in each budget category on the form provided. The figures for a consortium budget should represent project totals, not individual district amounts. On one side of no more than 2 additional pages, provide a narrative justification which explains how costs in each category were calculated for each district participating in the consortia and how those costs are related to the project's proposed educational and instructional activities. Specify hardware, software, and online resources and services to be purchased and describe how those will connect to the student learning and achievement objectives identified in the narrative. Funds can be used to provide release time for staff development.

Budget pages do not count against the ten page limit.

Letter of Agreement

The superintendent or chief administrative officer of the agency acting as the fiscal agent for the project must sign the Letter of Agreement pages.

Letters of Support

Letters of support from potential partners in the project are welcome and may be included at the end of the application without counting against the allotted pages for completing the narrative.

Delivery of Applications

A paper copy the original application for the grant is due at the Nebraska Department of Education, Education Technology Center, no later than 5:00 p.m., June 20, 2008 or must be postmarked no later than June 20, 2008. Late applications or faxed applications will not be accepted. Electronic applications may be submitted in lieu of paper applications and must be e-mailed no later than June 20, 2008. e-mail to jim.lukesh@nde.ne.gov

You will receive an e-mail confirmation of the receipt of your electronic or paper application.

Send applications to:

Nebraska Department of Education
Education Technology Center
301 Centennial Mall South
Lincoln, NE 68509-4987
attn: Jim Lukesh
jim.lukesh@nde.ne.gov

Hand-delivered applications accepted at sixth floor of the Nebraska Department of Education. Ask the receptionist to call Jim Lukesh.

Narrative Categories

1. Description of Project   **5 points**

   A description or abstract of the project itself
   a. Summarizes or concentrates the essentials of the grant
   b. Presents a clear explanation of the projects and activities that will take place as a result of the grant
   c. Leaves the reader with no doubt about what the project is to accomplish

2. Educational Need   **15 points**

The clarity of the proposal depicting educational need
   d. Clearly defines and documents the academic need in the identified core academic focus area(s) and 21st Century Skills
   e. Documents academic needs in terms consistent with NDE Curriculum Standards
   f. Thoroughly defines the need for the assistance in acquiring and using technology

3. Vision, Goals and Activities   **30 points**

The vision, goals, and activities involved
   g. Demonstrates a clear vision of what the school wishes to achieve through the implementation of this project
   h. Recognizes a clear understanding of the impact that on-going professional development can have on improving student performance
   i. Extends the vision of the project beyond the scope of the implementation, to include transformations that would impact the rest of the school and district
   j. Shows strong evidence that the implementation of this project will strengthen the ability of those involved to improve progress toward meeting measurable objectives that already exist in the school improvement and technology plans
   k. Identifies relevant and appropriate activities, aligned to the goals of the program, that will ensure success in the implementation of this program
   l. Identifies an appropriate, realistic timeline for the activities
   m. Identifies measurable evaluation methods for the activities
   n. Project incorporates student-centered, project-based, or engaged learning models

4. Personnel: School, District   **15 points**
and/or ESU support

The personnel and support
- o. Tells who will be involved in the project
- p. Shows support from the local administration, district and or ESU which may include additional funding, experience or expertise in relation to implementing a successful project
- q. The reader has confidence in the ability of the person(s) to succeed in their implementation of the project

5. Local Evaluation   **10 points**

The local evaluation and potential for improved student academic achievement
- r. Contains specific goals and benchmarks for teachers and or students that are expected as a result of grant activities
- s. Describes what will be considered acceptable evidence that the instructional context is improving and that technology is being used effectively
- t. Provides a timeline/plan of how data will be collected, analyzed and reported
- u. Assign specific individuals the responsibility for managing the evaluation, including specific timelines
- v. Incorporates plans for a year end summary of the project is to be provided to NDE

6. Dissemination and Communication   **15 points**

The dissemination and communication of the project and the potential for continuation after the duration of the grant
- w. Clear descriptions of what the applicant hopes to gain from participating in this grant program
- x. Strong focus on disseminating information that will improve student achievement specific to the content area focus and 21st Century Skills
- y. The use of technology to aid dissemination activities
- z. A dissemination timeline/plan that benefits a broad audience and a great number of people

7. Holistic Score   **10 points**

A holistic score based on the readers overall opinion of the proposal

aa. A holistic score of up to 10 points based on the overall quality of the application and the likelihood that the applicant has the capacity to ensure high-quality implementation

Budget Worksheet

In working out an explanation of your budget you may want to explain some of the following:

Use of Funds
        Hardware/equipment
        Software/instructional materials/online resources
        Professional Development
                Technology literacy
                Technology Integration
                Technology skills and use
        Infrastructure/facilities

Funds
        Competitive funds used:
                Stipends/salaries/benefits
                Consultative services
                Tuition
                supplies
        Formula funds used:
        Transferred funds used:
        Funds from other sources used:
        Funds for private schools

Subject Areas affected
Grade Levels affected

Activities and where they fit in the proposal

This is not an exhaustive list but may give you an idea of how to explain the budget to the grant reviewers.

You may use two pages (standard 8 1/2 x 11 paper using no smaller than 10 point font and standard margins (1 inch) and double spacing). These pages do not count against the limit for explaining your project.

Background Information

Qwest Foundation Technology Innovation Grants

The Qwest Foundation, through the Nebraska Department of Education, requests proposals for five $10,000 grants to improve student academic achievement through technology. The grants will be awarded, on a competitive basis, to school districts in which an educator or group of educators, best demonstrates innovation in the use of educational technology in the classroom.

The intent of the program is to bring about improvements in the delivery of classroom instruction in the core academic subjects that effectively prepare students to meet Nebraska academic content standards, improve student academic achievement and acquire 21st Century Skills.

The duration of the grant will be one year from the date of issuance of the Grant Award Notification. Since this is not a federal program the grant funds are not subject to the Tydings Amendment.

The grants will be funded by the Qwest Foundation and administered by the Learning Technologies section of the Nebraska Department of Education.

Suggested Activities

The successful applicant will formulate a proposal using one or more of the following guidelines.
- Implement existing and new applications of technology to support 21st Century Skills acquisition
- Implement existing and new applications of technology to support continuous school improvement efforts
- Establish or expand initiatives, particularly initiatives involving public-private partnerships, designed to increase access to technology for students and teachers
- Adapt or expand existing and new applications of technology to enable teachers to increase student academic achievement
- Acquire proven and effective courses and curricula that include integrated technology and are designed to help students meet challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards
- Utilize technology to develop or expand efforts to connect schools and teachers with parents and students to promote meaningful parental involvement, to foster increased communication about curricula, assignments and assessments between students, parents, and teachers
- Acquire connectivity linkages, resources, and services in order to improve student academic achievement
- Develop and implement information technology courses

Examples of proposed projects can include but are not limited to:

A technology-rich classroom in which funding would be used for a laptop, a projector, an interactive white board, and handheld student response-assessment devices to equip the classroom for integration of instructional technology tools to deliver and assess curriculum. The classroom could be used for instruction and professional development.

Project funds could be used for a classroom laptop initiative in which in instructor and group of students are given use of laptops for the duration of the course. This type of project would present opportunities for leveraging funds such as a district match to provide more laptops and in-kind training from the Educational Service Unit or the Department of Education.

Project funding could also be used to assist teachers in developing on-line content by taking traditional lessons and "digitizing" them to be put on-line for use by other teachers through the use of course management tools.

Project funding could also be used to support teachers mapping current curriculum and or standards to the 21st Century Skills framework. http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/

Project funding could also be used for a collaborative learning initiative utilizing handheld assessment devices, hand-held or pocket personal computers.

Activities of the proposal should be in line with the following goals of the Nebraska State Board of Education and the Nebraska Department of Education.

State Board Goal #6: Improve teaching and learning by promoting and support appropriate uses of technology.

NDE Goal #12 Equity: Develop and implement a plan to ensure equity of opportunity and outcomes for all groups of students

NDE Goal #2: Integrate work of STARS, NCLB and all appropriate programs with comprehensive school improvement model.

(The above suggestions are intended to provide examples of potential projects which will spark the imagination of teachers wishing to use technology in the classroom. They are not intended to limit the innovation of the proposals to the above examples.)

Grants will be read by teams of readers selected by the Nebraska Department of Education. The decision of the readers will be final.

Readers of the grant applications will score the applications based on:

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   a. Summarizes or concentrates the essentials of the grant
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3. The clarity of the proposal depicting educational need
   a. Clearly defines and documents the academic need in the identified core academic focus area(s) and 21st Century Skills
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   c. Thoroughly defines the need for the assistance in acquiring and using technology
4. The vision, goals, and activities involved
   a. Demonstrates a clear vision of what the school wishes to achieve through the implementation of this project
   b. Recognizes a clear understanding of the impact that on-going professional development can have on improving student performance
   c. Extends the vision of the project beyond the scope of the implementation, to include transformations that would impact the rest of the school and district
   d. Shows strong evidence that the implementation of this project will strengthen the ability of those involved to improve progress toward meeting measurable objectives that already exist in the school improvement and technology plans
   e. Identifies relevant and appropriate activities, aligned to the goals of the program, that will ensure success in the implementation of this program
   f. Identifies an appropriate, realistic timeline for the activities
   g. Identifies measurable evaluation methods for the activities
   h. Project incorporates student-centered, project-based, or engaged learning models
5. The personnel and support
   a. Tells who will be involved in the project
   b. Shows support from the local administration, district and or ESU which may include additional funding, experience or expertise in relation to implementing a successful project
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6. The local evaluation and potential for improved student academic achievement
    a. Contains specific goals and benchmarks for teachers and or students that are expected as a result of grant activities
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    e. Incorporates plans for a year end summary of the project is to be provided to NDE
7. The dissemination and communication of the project and the potential for continuation after the duration of the grant
    a. Clear descriptions of what the applicant hopes to gain from participating in this grant program
    b. Strong focus on disseminating information that will improve student achievement specific to the content area focus and 21st Century Skills
    c. The use of technology to aid dissemination activities
    d. A dissemination timeline/plan that benefits a broad audience and a great number of people
8. A holistic score based on the readers overall opinion of the proposal
    a. A holistic score of up to 10 points based on the overall quality of the application and the likelihood that the applicant has the capacity to ensure high-quality implementation

Size of Award

Five grants of $10,000 will be awarded.

For more information or questions please contact:

Jim Lukesh
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402-471-0531
http://www.nde.state.ne.us/TECHCEN/QwestGrants.htm